

new level. We are responsibly removing our troops from Iraq and ending that war—after seven years of a war that carried enormous costs in lives and resources. We have restored America's leadership and standing in the world, strengthening our alliances and building new partnerships—after years of frayed alliances and growing opposition to our leadership. We have rallied the world around the ambitious goal of securing all vulnerable nuclear material around the world in 4 years, including specific steps and a clear plan for achieving that goal—after years of insufficient action against the gravest threat we face.

We have reset our relations with Russia, including the most comprehensive nuclear arms treaty in 20 years—after relations with Russia fell to a post-Cold War low. We have increased Iran's isolation through our diplomatic efforts, tightening enforcement on U.S. sanctions, seeking broader sanctions through the U.N., and building a broader coalition of countries to stand up to Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons—after years in which Iran went from zero centrifuges to 7000, and strengthened its position in the region.

We are pursuing a comprehensive peace in the Middle East, which would enhance Israel's security—after years in which America was too often absent from the peace process.

We have led an unprecedented international response to the global economic crisis through the G-20, averting catastrophe and putting our economy on the pathway to recovery—after the gravest economic crisis that we've faced since the Great Depression.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1320.

HAITI ECONOMIC LIFT PROGRAM ACT OF 2010

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 2010

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5160—the Haiti Eco-

nomic Lift Program Act of 2010. As a co-sponsor of this bill, I strongly believe that it is another important and necessary step to ensure successful recovery and future sustainability in Haiti.

Haiti's long term development is the ultimate concern and goal of all participating donors and supporting organizations. January's earthquake struck Haiti during a time of economic vulnerability. Before the earthquake, Haiti was, by far, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. However, the United States has led the way in securing a stable and prosperous future for the people and government of Haiti.

We have displayed our commitment through trade preference programs including the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act, as amended by the United States-Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act, the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement Act of 2006, "HOPE Act", and the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement Act of 2008, "HOPE II Act". These amendments extended duty-free tariff treatment to certain apparel produced in Haiti and have made an important contribution to Haiti's economic development efforts.

Before the earthquake, Haiti also has among the world's lowest levels of gross domestic product per capita. An estimated 80 percent of the population lived under the poverty line and 54 percent living in abject poverty, according to the CIA World Factbook. According to the United Nations Human Development Report, more than two-thirds of the labor force is believed to not have formal jobs, and just 62.1 percent of adults over age 15 are literate. Additionally, 18 percent of Haitians did not live to the age of 40.

Yet, despite the destruction wreaked by multiple tropical storms in 2008, Haiti's economy and infrastructure-building seemed to be turning a corner in recent years, aided by international support and debt relief programs.

In fact, according to the New York Times, "Haiti was one of only two Caribbean countries expected to grow in 2009. There were hopes of a tourism revival, reinforced by the

announcement that a new Comfort Inn would open there this May. In a sign of its growing structural sophistication, Haiti even recently announced that it would begin collecting better national statistics, with the help of the International Monetary Fund, so that it could better assess and calibrate its economic policies." The earthquake on January derailed this progress.

Today we approved a bill which will help Haiti recover from that devastating earthquake by opening the U.S. market to more clothing from the Caribbean country, sparking growth in Port-au-Prince and the surrounding region. Subsequently, when the bill reaches the Senate, I urge my colleagues to move quickly in support of the bill.

The clothing sector accounted for 75 percent of Haiti's export earnings and employed more than 25,000 people before the January 12 earthquake that killed more than 300,000, and this bill makes it more attractive for clothing manufacturers to invest in new facilities in Haiti by extending and expanding the duty-free access to the U.S. clothing market under two separate programs.

As important as this legislation is, it is only one part of a much larger American assistance response to the earthquake. America will continue to respond with humanitarian assistance to help the people of this struggling island nation rebuild their livelihoods. I send my condolences to the people and government of Haiti as they grieve once again in the aftermath of a natural disaster. As Haiti's neighbor, I believe it is the United States' responsibility to help Haiti recover, and build the capacity to mitigate against future disasters.

Once again I stand in solidarity with the people of Haiti and will do everything in my power to assist them with rebuilding their country and livelihoods. I am proud of our first responders, and pledge that America's long term commitment to Haiti will live up to the standard that the first responders set.